

The SAVING REVELATION

By Virginia Leila Wentz

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The day had been hard, bright and cold. Out in Central park there was the jangle of sleighbells in the air—people, for the most part, making for home, because the strong wind which had suddenly swept up the city streets was now driving a dizzy herd of snowflakes before it.

Women sitting in their sleighs, under the full stare of the setting sun, did not feel their rugs and furs were a whit too heavy. Down in the city's narrow streets and wind swept tenements the poor drew their shawls and coat collars higher round gray, pinched faces.

Helena Christy had to hold her toque on with both hands. Her cheeks and lips were as red as June roses. Some chiffon ribbons blew out from under her furs and flapped across her companion's face. They had the faint scent of some flower or other. Whatever it was, it was the scent he loved best in the world.

But if either the woman or the perfume awakened any sentiment in him the expression of the Hon. Keisle Siddons did not show it. His handsome, manly face wore the aspect of stern restraint habitual to him.

As he leaned against the sleigh cushions and beheld the diminishing perspective of electric light prickling itself out down the snowy drive, caught sight of the blue mounted police on their mettlesome steeds and recognized familiar faces in the long procession of sleighs and carriages rolling northward, he was conscious of only one thing—he had set out on this drive with the fixed purpose of asking the woman beside him to become his wife. And her home lay just at the lower end of the park.

He was a man who never went back on his fixed purposes.

As they were turning out of the park on Fifty-ninth street Helena was saying: "The woman who is worth while never undervalues the offer of marriage from any man. Be he much or little, it is the greatest compliment he can pay her. Coming from you, my friend, such a compliment is the more to be valued. But I cannot marry you."

The man did not answer at once. Neither did the expression of his face seem to change. He tucked the lap robe around her a little more securely.

"Do you know," he remarked when he had finished with the fur robe, "I'd like to trespass a little further some time and ask permission to discuss the matter with you?" They were pulling up in front of the big white stone apartment house where she lived.

"As I said," came back Helena's voice lightly as she undid his work of tucking. "In asking me to marry you you paid me a great compliment. In exchange, I dare say, I owe you permission to indulge your hobby for argument and discussion. Come in now, won't you, and have some tea with me? I warn you no amount of argument can profit either of us; but still, come."

Within, behind heavily curtained windows, in sharp contrast to the biting cold without, were sweet warmth, soft rugs, draped screens, shaded lamps, all the dainty plenishings of a modern boudoir. In the fast growing dusk the firelight flashed on the little silver kettle beginning to steam at the spout; on the Dresden and old Worcester ware on the ebony tea table; on the woman who had drawn a low cushioned chair close beside it.

"The situation is like this," the man was saying in rather much the same tone of voice he would have used in arguing an important case before the supreme court: "You are thirty—or is it thirty-one? You have a reputation as a brilliant, beautiful woman and all that. You can, I am aware, marry any one of three or four men who can offer quite as much as I, but modesty was never a characteristic of mine. And I can give you almost anything you wish that costs money. I stand well in my profession—close to the top of it, in fact. I am not yet forty. On the whole, a marriage between us might be what is termed a very suitable match."

The woman smiled openly. "Does the prosecution here close its defense?" Her father also had been a judge. "Sugar and cream? Yes? Well, here!" She deftly poured out the fragrant drink.

As the man reached for his cup he looked at her a trifle perplexed.

"Are you offended?" he asked. "I've made an offer of marriage in a perfectly businesslike way, having heard you often declare that a marriage contract is like any other contract and should be entered into only when both parties are aware of what they are doing and are rid of glamour."

His companion paid him the tribute of a lingering glance in which a question mark was barely perceptible. But in the shadows he could no longer see her face—only the white parting of her burnished hair where the firelight shone. In a second she was sipping her tea nonchalantly enough and had recovered her vein of light railleury.

"Offended? Oh, certainly not. But the defense will submit an argument. The match would be, as you say, a suitable one—what do our French cousins call it?—marriage de convenance. As for the three or four men to whom you refer, I cannot answer. I've noticed, however, that the number of my proposals is falling off lately. I attribute

the fact to advancing age. You were not wrong when you said I was thirty-one. The defense will close the argument by saying that she has determined to become an old maid!"

The Hon. Keisle Siddons was leaning forward, his strong, muscular hands clasped loosely before him, a whimsical smile on his lips.

"Oh, you will never die an old maid! I will answer for that!" The smile vanished. He resumed his stolid manner. "But your refusal of me is final, I take it?"

"Do I seem to be melting?" Helena inquired, with a touch of defiance which comforted him with the tumultuous beating of her heart and a most annoying feeling of tremulousness about her lips.

The man rose and went to the window. Far off, across the park, arose the big hotels on the plaza, their lofty outlines seen obscurely through the snowdrift. The lights of the swiftly moving sleighs and carriages down below glimmered faintly, and above all and through all trembled the unearthly voice that is never silent, though it may speak in various moods—the voice that molds into itself the cry of human joy, the wail of human sorrow, the roar and crush and rush of the million mindless things that man has made to serve his ends—the voice of the great city.

"I think," he said at last, and his voice seemed to Helena to sound far away, "that I forgot to mention one thing in my proposal. I should have told you, perhaps, that I love you, that I've loved you since the day when we first met, that I'd rather have your love than the power of a king or the wealth of a Croesus, that I should count it fine and wonderful beyond all imagining—a moment to die for—if I read in your eyes that you, too, loved me. Not wishing to be a beggar of love, I've waited all these years to be in a position to offer you the things which I was bold enough to mention as rendering me eligible for your hand."

His voice had become provocingly low and husky. Now he turned to her almost fiercely:

"You who are so collected and calm, what can you know of love and passion? Now I realize that I've told all these years in vain—no, not wholly vainly, for I'm going to kiss you once—here, now—if it means the worst!"

He caught her to him and rained kisses upon her—her lips, her eyes, her brow. When he released her it was with the full consciousness that he had committed an unforgivable wrong. He stepped backward until there lay between them a broad strip of fire lit rug.

But the woman held out her arms to him, and the lashes of her eyes were wet.

"Sweetheart," she whispered as she crossed her slim hands behind his dark head and drew it down to her level, "why didn't you tell me that you loved me at first? That was the saving revelation!"

Human Ear Wagers.

There is no doubt that at one period every one could move the "pinna," or external ear, at will. The muscles for the purpose are found in man, as in the horse and the donkey, although disuse has caused them to become inoperative.

The Australian aborigines, the Papuans, and other savages, whose acuteness of hearing excels ours, can all, speaking generally, control the movements of the pinna completely. So can certain peculiarly constituted individuals among civilized races, although where these occur they are usually exhibited as "freaks" at shows and the like.

J. Muller, the German scientist, by will effort and practice continued over many years actually succeeded in regaining the power of moving his ears freely and quickly. It is, moreover, not beyond probability that the progress of inventions, such as that of wireless telegraphy, may lead to the redevelopment in man of the primeval ear was, possibly with the assistance of mechanical additions to accentuate its effect.

A Queer Express.

Not many years ago, on the high-roads about Wittenberg, in Germany, travelers frequently met an old woman trudging slowly along, pushing before her a light wheelbarrow loaded with bundles and parcels. The old woman was at least sixty, but she was so cheerful and uncomplaining that the people had no hesitation in employing her. She had many knickknacks and parcels to carry to and from the city, into which three or four times a week she pushed her barrow, which folks called the "Wittenberg express." This plucky old woman walked with her express wheelbarrow at least ten miles each trip, and her earnings, a small fee for each parcel, served to support herself and her two invalid daughters, who could do only a little sewing. The old woman would allow no one to pity her. She liked the work, she said, and was only sorry that as she grew older she could not make such frequent trips, for her earnings were helping herself and her children.—St. Nicholas.

Philistine Fancies.

When we speak of a man's worth we refer either to his source of strength (character) or his source of weakness (cash).

Though it be suspected that love is blind, it were safer nevertheless that she wear blinders.

The much discussed "man who gets the most out of college" is, after all, the biggest crabber.

Man is descended, we admit, from a monkey; woman, we infer, from a parrot.

A Surprise Party.

A pleasant surprise party may be given to your stomach and liver, by taking a medicine which will relieve their pain and discomfort, viz: Dr. King's New Life Pills. They are a most wonderful remedy, affording sure relief and cure, for headache, dizziness and constipation. 25c at Chas. Rogers' drug store.

Fortified Against Criticism.

Teacher—I am going to send for your mother, Johnny, and show her what a shocking composition you brought in today.

Johnny—Go ahead an' send her. I don't care. Me mudder wrote it, anyway.—Judge.

Sure of One Thing.

"Are you happy, now that you are rich?" asked the old time friend.

"I don't know as I'm happy," answered Mr. Cumrox, "but I'm dead sure I'm not as discontented as I would be if I was broke."—Washington Star.

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